

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT TARGET OBJECTIVES

BY STAGE OF DEVELOPMENT

Infant	Toddler
2.1 Belonging 3.1 Comfort, Love, and Appropriate Affection 4.0 Leisure or Play Competence 4.1 Play or Leisure 4.2 Parallel Play or Leisure	2.1 Belonging 2.2 Nurturing, Loving, Sharing Appropriate Affection 3.1 Comfort, Love, and Appropriate Affection 3.2 Approval and Encouragement 3.3 Directions 3.4 Corrective Feedback 4.1 Solitary Play or Leisure 4.2 Parallel Play or Leisure
Preschool	School-age through Adulthood
1.0 Relationship Initiation 2.1 Belonging 2.2 Nurturing, Loving, Sharing Appropriate Affection 2.3 Recognizing and Valuing Differences 2.4 a Sharing 2.4 b Taking Turns 2.4 c Asserting 2.5 Ignoring 2.6 Negotiating 2.7 Building Consensus 3.1 Comfort, Love, and Appropriate Affection 3.2 Approval and Encouragement 3.3 Directions 3.4 Corrective Feedback 4.1 Solitary Play or Leisure 4.2 Parallel Play or Leisure 4.3 Associative Play or Leisure 4.4 Cooperative Play or Leisure 4.5 Companionate Play or Leisure	1.0 Relationship Initiation 2.1 Belonging 2.2 Nurturing, Loving, Sharing Appropriate Affection 2.3 Recognizing and Valuing Differences 2.4 a Sharing 2.4 b Taking Turns 2.4 c Asserting 2.5 Ignoring 2.6 Negotiating 2.7 Building Consensus 3.1 Comfort, Love, and Appropriate Affection 3.2 Approval and Encouragement 3.3 Directions 3.4 Corrective Feedback 4.1 Solitary Play or Leisure 4.2 Parallel Play or Leisure 4.3 Associative Play or Leisure 4.4 Cooperative Play or Leisure 4.5 Companionate Play or Leisure

Take a moment to review the Social Domain Target Objective Menu on the back cover of this book and take note of the four stages of children's development. This table shows you the target objectives that are appropriate for the age of your child.

2.0 RELATIONSHIP MAINTENANCE

2.1 Belonging

Belonging is:

- * having the experience that one is a part of the group.
- * fitting in.
- * being connected to a group or an individual.
- * being in the right place.

Christ expresses it when He teaches his disciples to pray (Mt 6:5–15), calls his disciples his family (Mt 12:49–50), looks around him and says, "These are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is brother and sister and mother to me" (Mk 3:34–35), tells his mother she belongs to the disciple he loves and that he belongs to her (Jn 19:26–27), travels with his disciples (Mk 6:30–31), tells us that we belong to Him and His Father and all He has belongs to the Father and all the Father has belongs to us through Him (Jn 17:9–10; Mk 9:41), calls his disciples his friends (Lk 12:4), says "I have greatly desired to eat this Passover with you... (Lk 22:15), entrusts the care of his mother, Mary, to the beloved disciple (John 19:26-27)

It is important because:

- * all human beings need to belong. We all need to feel we have a place in the group.
- * an individual who has a sense of belonging, being connected to a group, tends to be happy and content within oneself. This individual is often eager to enter into relationships and ready to give of oneself.
- * an individual who senses he is not part of the group tends to carry frustration and anger deep within. The individual often shows this by the way he moves towards or draws away from relationships.
- * when one belongs to the body of Christ, one's gifts are called forth to edify the body and help the whole body to grow in holiness and knowledge of God.
- * by one Spirit we are baptized into one body (1 Cor 12:13).

One would exhibit it by:

- * interacting easily with others.
- * engaging in conversations about friends.
- * recognizing family, friends, and events in photos and videos.
- * asking to play with friends.
- * referring to others as friends.
- * being comfortable spending time with friends and family members joining a church.
- * joining a ministry within the church.

AUTHOR'S NOTES:

Belonging is a fundamental human need and a complex emotional experience that All children need to feel that they belong to a family and to a group such as a group of friends that gathers to play. The importance of belonging is evident in various aspects of life, including family, friendships, communities, workplaces, and cultural or social groups. A strong sense of belonging is associated with increased well-being, self-esteem, and mental health. Conversely, feelings of exclusion or isolation can lead to negative emotional and psychological consequences.

Developing a genuine sense of belonging is the foundation for commitment to another. St. Paul wrote of the ultimate one to belong to, Jesus Christ, when he said, "There does not exist among you Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female. All are one in Christ Jesus" (Col 3:11).

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT IT

1. Take pictures and make photo albums of your family. Show your child the photos. Identify each family member in the photos. Tell your child how he or she is related to or knows the people in the photos.
2. Make a church photo album. Show your child the photos. Identify the people in the photos. Describe their ministries.
3. Tell stories about family members. Point out family traditions. Talk with your child about your adult friends and about your child's friends.
4. Take pictures of your child with friends and family. Label the pictures. Display the pictures around your home.
5. Establishing family rituals: weekly game nights, holiday traditions, or special outings.
6. Share stories about your family's history, heritage, and ancestors. Teach your child about their roots and cultural background to help them feel connected to their heritage.
7. Encourage inclusivity within the family. Ensure that all family members are involved in decision-making and that everyone's opinions are respected.
8. Develop activities for your child to feel like a part of their group of friends or family.
9. Read stories, tell stories, and encourage your child to talk about your child's friends.
10. Plan activities that encourage your child to include others in their playgroup.
11. Invite your child to spend time with friends and family.
12. Browse through photo albums, videos, and social media pictures of family, and as you do, talk about your family and friends.
13. Teach your child to be involved in church by using talents, time, or financial gifts that came from sacrificing food or a toy (Ps 92:13-14).
14. Talk with your child about the importance of Christian friends and Christ-centered friendships.
15. Plan activities for your child and your child's friends. Play scavenger hunts, hide-and-seek, musical chairs, etc. Talk about your child's friends at mealtime and other times of the day.
16. Let your child draw pictures or make an album of his or her friends.
17. Play "family and friend" games such as "I'm thinking of someone who _____".
18. Foster positive relationships among siblings by encouraging them to spend time together, play together, and resolve conflicts peacefully.
19. Strengthen connections with extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. These relationships can provide a broader sense of belonging.
20. Show interest in your child's hobbies and passions. Attend their sports games, recitals, or other activities to demonstrate your support and involvement.
21. Nurture a sense of belonging to the Kingdom of God through children's praise music, being faithful to the church and church events and activities, and Christian books and videos.
22. Encourage your child to share Christian music with friends.
23. On the Feast of the Holy Family—the first Sunday after Christmas—plan a special family celebration and meal. Pray and ask for the wisdom, age, and grace of Jesus.
24. Talk with your child about who Jesus' closest friends were (the twelve disciples in Mt 10, Mk 3:14, or maybe Martha, Mary, and Lazarus in Jn 11:5, Jn 12).
25. Teach your child that "Abba" means "Daddy". Read Rom 8:15. Talk with your child about how we all have the same Father.
26. Talk with your child about what it means to belong to the family of God.
27. Draw pictures, cut out pictures from magazines, or take pictures and make a photo album that depicts the family of God. Reference the Catechism of the Catholic Church (#813-822).